

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5962

FOR RICHARDSON, ATHERTON, AND KEOGH FROM MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: GDS - DECLASSIFY FOLLOWING NOVEMBER 1974

TAGS: OGEN, IN, US

SUBJ: LIBRARIES: LET'S OPEN ONE IN BANGALORE

1. MUCH THAT WE DO IN INDIA HAS IMPRESSED ME, BUT OF LITTLE THAT WE DO WOULD I SAY THAT ITS QUALITY IS UNIFORMLY EXCELLENT. A NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS OUR AMERICAN LIBRARIES, WHICH ARE BOTH IMPRESSIVE AND EXCELLENT. NO ONE HERE NOW CAN TAKE CREDIT FOR THAT; WE INHERITED FIVE EXCELLENT LIBRARIES, AND IF WE HAVE DONE ANYTHING IT HAS BEEN SIMPLY TO MAINTAIN THAT QUALITY. IN A COUNTRY WITH THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT, A COUNTRY WITH MILLIONS OF GRADUATES, AND A COUNTRY WHERE MUCH OF THE LEADERSHIP IS FLUENT IN ENGLISH, I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER WAY FOR US TO ASSIST INDIAN TO LEARN ABOUT THE UNITED STATES THAN BY MAKING AVAILABLE TO THEM A SET OF FIRST RATE AMERICAN LIBRARIES.

2. I HAVE REPEATEDLY HEARD THE DREARY TALE OF HOW AND WHY WE CLOSED THE OLD CULTURAL CENTERS. HAD I BEEN HERE DURING THOSE DAY I AM SURE I WOULD HAVE HAD EVEN LESS PATIENCE THAN KEN KEATING, JOE SISCO, AND FRANK SHAKESPEARE. AS A RESULT WE MIGHT NOT HAVE ANY LIBRARIES TODAY* IN ANY EVENT, THE RIGHT DECISION WAS OBVIOUSLY
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MADE.

3. THERE HAS BEEN MUCH WATER OVER THE DAM SINCE. I NEED NOT REHEARSE FOR YOU THE WAYS IN WHICH THE CLIMATE (IF NOT THE WEATHER*) APPEARS TO HAVE IMPROVED, EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT WHEN I COMPLAINED THAT OTHER DAY ABOUT WHAT NEHUR'S NEWSPAPER SAID ABOUT THE SECRETARY AND ME, THE NEXT MORNING IT RAN A BOX ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE THAT AT LEAST CORRECTED THE MORE OBVIOUS LIES. A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME AROUND FOR A TALK, AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SUGGESTED A QUIET DINNER. THEY ARE TRYING. IN SOME RESPECTS, THEY ARE VERY TRYING, BUT NONETHELESS WE ARE ABOUT TO TALK ABOUT AID AND YOU ARE ALREADY DISCUSSING A JOINT COMMISSION. OUR CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM HAS BEEN REVIVED AND IS BEGINNING TO MOVE. THE GOI HAS EVEN APPROVED SOME NEW IVP GRANTS, THE FIRST SINCE 1971. ALTHOUGH US-INDIAN RELATIONS ARE STILL A MATTER OF CONTROVERSY IN INDIA, I READ THAT AS MORE A FUNCTION OF THEIR DEBATE ABOUT DOMESTIC POLICY THAN ANY GREAT DISPUTE AS TO THE MERITS OF IMPROVED RELATIONS, IN ANY CASE, IT'S A TIME TO MAKE USE OF WHATEVER ASSETS WE HAVE, AND IT MAY BE A TIME TO AUGMENT THEM.

4. THIS BRINGS ME AROUND TO THE PROSPECT OF OPENING AT LEAST ONE MORE LIBRARY. IN CALCUTTA LAST WEEK, AT WHAT AL HEMSING TELLS ME AS AN "HISTORIC" GATHERING OF PAOS AND CONSULS GENERAL FROM EVERY POST IN THE COUNTRY, WE DECIDED THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO TRY THIS. THERE WAS NOT A DISSENTING VOICE IN THE ROOM. I THINK I CAN REPORT THAT IT IS THE UNANIMOUS VIEW OF THE SEASONED STATE AND USIS STAFF IN INDIA THAT WE OUGHT TO TRY.

5. JACK EAVES MAKES A CONVINCING CASE TO START IN BANGALORE. IT IS THE FIFTH CITY OF THE LAND, AND OFFICIALS THERE HAVE REPEATEDLY INDICATED THEIR UNHAPPINESS THAT THE OLD CENTER WAS CLOSED AND THEIR HOPE THAT WE MIGHT ONE DAY OPEN UP AGAIN. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE ENDURING "FRIENDLINESS" OF SOUTH INDIA*

6. MY PROPOSAL AT THIS TIME IS SIMPLY THAT WE BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOI. WE MAY FAIL. AT MINIMUM, WE
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WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT A WAY OF RUNNING OUR LIBRARY UNDER THE INDIAN RULES IN A MANNER THAT WOULD NEVERTHELESS PERMIT US TO HAVE AN AMERICAN LIBRARY EQUIVALENT IN EXCELLENCE TO THOSE WE RUN UNDER OUR OWN RULES.

7. I THINK WE SHOULD START SUCH TALKS IMMEDIATELY. WE ARE IN THE BEST POSITION TO GET WHAT WE WANT IF OUR REQUEST ARE MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND

THE INDIAN PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT COMMISSION.

8. AS A FIRST STEP, I PROPOSE WE INJECT INTO THE PLANNING FOR THE JOINT COMMISSION THE IDEA THAT ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES IT SHOULD ENCOURAGE IS THE RUNNING OF LIBRARIES IN EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY. THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY INSERTING A VERY BRIEF REFERENCE TO LIBRARIES INTO THE DRAFT JOINT COMMISSION AGREEMENT IN THE SECTION ON CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE.

9. CONCURRENTLY, WE WOULD ALSO START DISCUSSIONS HERE, ON THE BASIS THAT WE WANT AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE BEFORE THE SECRETARY COMES. WE MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT ACHIEVE IT BY THEN, BUT IN EITHER CASE WOULD PROPOSE TO MENTION IT IN WHATEVER JOINT COMMUNIQUE MIGHT FOLLOW THE VISIT, AS WELL AS IN THE JOINT COMMISSION AGREEMENT.

10. THIS IS NOT A HASTY PROPOSAL. AL HEMSING AND I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT SINCE AUGUST. HE REMINDS ME THAT WASHINGTON HAS EVEN SET ASIDE A MODEST SUM IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET TO BEGIN SUCH AN ENTERPRISE. IT'S BEEN IN OUR USIS COUNTRY PLAN FOR A YEAR. THE TIME HAS COME TO SPEND THAT MONEY IN A WAY WHICH IS MOST APPROPRIATE TO THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR RELATIONS AND INTERESTS HERE. ONCE THE LIBRARY GETS ESTABLISHED, MOST OF THE OPERATING COST CAN BE PAID FOR RUPEES.

11. PERHAPS BECAUSE I AM A PROFESSOR, I HAVE A SPECIAL FONDNESS FOR LIBRARIES. (I HAVE SURPASSING LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR PLACES CALLED "CULTURAL CENTERS", AND DON'T PROPOSE TO OPEN ANY, BUT LIBRARIES ARE A DIFFERENT STORY.) I HOPE YOU WILL AGREE, AND WILL ADVISE US BY RETURN CABLE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. WE NEED TO MOVE RAPIDLY.
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